

Data Sheet

USAID Mission:	Romania
Program Title:	Improved Local Democratic Governance
Pillar:	Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance
Strategic Objective:	186-0230
Proposed FY 2004 Obligation:	\$9,550,000 AEEB
Prior Year Unobligated:	\$1,170,000 AEEB
Proposed FY 2005 Obligation:	\$9,900,000 AEEB
Year of Initial Obligation:	FY 2002
Year of Final Obligation:	FY 2006

Summary: USAID's democracy program is improving local democratic governance, increasing the accountability of local politicians, building a stronger civil society and raising the ethical standards of judges and court staff. The program provides technical assistance and training to local governments to: improve services; strengthen financial management; increase responsiveness to citizens' needs; open decision-making to citizen participation; strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) to monitor and improve local government performance; promote effective participation of citizens in local politics to increase the accountability of local political parties; provide ethics training for judges and court staff; and strengthen the capacity of the Superior Council of Magistrates.

Inputs, Outputs, Activities:

FY 2004 Program:

Strengthen local government management and citizen participation (\$8,300,000 AEEB, \$64,000 AEEB carryover, \$806,000 AEEB prior year recoveries). Through its program to support democratic local governance, USAID will provide technical assistance and training to an additional 90 local governments while completing assistance to the original 79 city halls. This technical assistance is improving local government performance to deliver better public services more efficiently. USAID and selected Mission partners will also help local governments elaborate public policies and prioritize activities consistent with community needs. USAID assistance will continue to support long-term goals, such as local economic development and improving the national legislative framework, that promote sustainable local development. CSOs will also be involved in these reforms, through participation in public-private partnerships that will solve specific problems identified by citizens, and/or by monitoring local officials' performance to bring about enhanced transparency and accountability. Fifty CSOs will participate in strategic planning, as well as implementation and oversight activities during FY2004. Also 45 new community services will be created using participatory approaches. Further, USAID intends to use prior year unobligated funds to support Romanian-American partnerships that will work to improve local governance, and the citizens participation in the life of their communities. Current partners: Development Alternatives Inc. (prime); Academy for Educational Development (sub). Others are to be determined.

Increase local political organizations' responsiveness to grassroots initiatives (\$800,000 AEEB). The Opening Politics by Acting Locally (OPAL) program will expand its activities from eight to 13 counties. Assistance will focus on preparations for the elections in 2004 with an emphasis on training 225 local political party branches in candidate selection, electoral campaign management, and communication, campaign finance, and polling and research. OPAL will promote public awareness and advocacy campaigns by providing technical assistance to 15 civic groups with issues-based debates and with the monitoring of campaign and political party finances. Implementing partners: National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, International Republican Institute (Primes).

Increase independence, integrity and transparency of the judiciary (\$450,000 AEEB). USAID will continue to work with the Superior Council of Magistrates and the Ministry of Justice to develop clear and transparent judicial performance and evaluation standards. Three hundred judges will receive ethics

training. Additional judges will be trained by the National Magistrates' Institute using materials developed with USAID assistance. USAID will provide technical assistance to develop a code of ethics for court clerks and to build the capacity of the School of Clerks to train court staff on the new standards. USAID will also provide technical assistance to develop and conduct a specialized training for judges who hear access to information cases. USAID support will assist six courts to establish public information offices in compliance with the Access to Information Law. Implementing partner: American Bar Association/Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative (Prime).

Elections (\$300,000 AEEB carryover) USAID will use these funds to support increased transparency in campaign finance, balance media coverage, issue oriented debates, and increased voter turnout. Implementing partner: to be determined.

FY 2005 Program:

Strengthen local government management and citizen participation (\$8,650,000 AEEB). USAID will continue to provide training and technical assistance to the second target group of 90 local governments. USAID will award the second round of grants, totaling \$1 million, to local CSOs for projects to improve governance and local services. Implementing Partners: same as above.

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Increase local political organizations' responsiveness to grassroots initiatives (\$800,000 AEEB). USAID will continue to provide training and technical assistance to local branches of political parties and CSOs to encourage greater citizen participation in politics. Implementing Partners: same as above.

Increase independence, integrity and transparency of the judiciary (\$450,000 AEEB). USAID will continue to provide technical assistance and training to solidify reforms contained in the Law on Judicial Organization, the Statute of Magistrates, and the Law on the Organization of the Superior Council of Magistrates, which will be passed in 2004. Implementing Partners: same as above.

Performance and Results: USAID assistance contributed directly to better democratic governance in Romania. Fifty U.S.-assisted CSOs now participate in strategic planning, implementation and oversight activities with local authorities. Thirty-one CSOs work with 134 local governments on priority projects identified by citizens. USAID assistance to five political parties has resulted in more effective communication by party officials with CSOs. CSOs advocate local government reforms that address citizens' concerns such as the lack of shelters for victims of domestic violence, the lack of medical personnel in villages, and the need for transparent local budgeting. CSOs also work with local governments on procedures for allocating local government funds to CSOs, and to increase the capacity of small rural authorities to manage development funds. In one of USAID's programs, \$2.7 million has leveraged another \$3.2 million from private U.S. sources, Romanian NGOs, and local governments for partnership in Romania. As a result of the civics education program, more than 600 teachers are using a new civics text and curriculum in their classrooms. USAID assistance has supported an Alternate Dispute Resolution pilot program, and now a cadre of 20 lawyers is using mediation to resolve civil cases more rapidly and less expensively than taking them to court. The Rule of Law program has successfully tested case assignment software in eight courts. The software will be handed over to the Ministry of Justice for nationwide distribution and implementation. The National Magistrates' Institute has developed, with USAID assistance, a judicial ethics handbook and reference materials to be used in training programs.

By the end of the current (FY 2006) strategy, USAID expects that the quality of public services will improve, while unit costs will be reduced. Local governments will increase their generation and retention of own-source revenues. CSOs will be monitoring and influencing more effectively the performance of local public officials. Local civic organizations will be partnering with local authorities to deliver services that respond better to citizens' needs. The Superior Council of Magistrates will play a stronger role in the promotion, discipline, and removal of judges. A code of ethics for court staff will be enforced. Courts will implement the Freedom of Information Act.